

CABE, CAS, CCER, CONNCAN AND CAPSS POSITION ON STATE AID TO PUBLIC EDUCATION

The CT Association of Boards of Education (CABE), the CT Association of Schools (CAS), the CT Coalition for Education Reform (CCER), the CT Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN) and the CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) urge Gov. Malloy and the Legislature to initiate a process that will truly transform how CT finances public education.

Connecticut needs a new K-12 funding formula now because:

- There is no unified and consistent funding system that provides resources for every child enrolled in a Connecticut public school. Connecticut currently uses more than 10 different funding formulas to fund public schools.
- Currently, funding for districts and schools is not allocated according to student needs.
- The foundation for school funding is not grounded in the actual cost of educating a child, and thus is subject to expedient changes to district allocations by the General Assembly.

In light of these concerns, CABE, CAS, CCER, ConnCAN and CAPSS urge state policy makers to establish a funding system that is based on the following set of guiding principles.

- **Equity:** Student learning needs and enrollment should drive state and local funding. Students at all public schools should receive equitable state and local funding. Low-income students, students who are English Learners and students who require special education services, should be funded according to their learning needs.
- **Innovation:** The system should incentivize innovative and efficient practices in support of mastery-based personalized learning.
- **Coherence:** A single funding system for all school types should replace the current ECS grant and the various additional per-pupil funding methods.
- **Transparency:** Schools and districts should be able to predict their annual funding from both state and local sources and funding levels should be grounded in verifiable and transparent data.

- ***Fairness:*** Education funding is a shared state and local responsibility. State aid for each community should be determined by a combination of factors, including multiple measures of property and income conditions, and concentration of low-income students.
- ***Accountability:*** State and local education funds should be used wisely, mindful of broader fiscal constraints in Connecticut, and districts should be accountable for how they use their financial resources. Education expenditures should be transparent and regularly reported so that spending can be compared across schools and districts.

The first step toward designing a new school funding system is to estimate the fundamental cost of delivering instructional services to every student in each public school in Connecticut, including district schools, magnet schools, technical high schools, charter schools, and regional vocational agricultural centers.

The purposes of developing the Core Instructional Cost are to:

- Ensure that every student has access to fundamental teaching and learning opportunities in every school in Connecticut.
- Utilize actual education spending data in Connecticut to estimate core education cost for students, including those with higher needs and to allocate state aid to support localities with limited fiscal capacity across all school types.
- Promote funding predictability and transparency for legislative decisions and for school and district planning.

CABE, CAS, CCER, ConnCAN and CAPSS, therefore, call upon State policy makers to initiate this year a collaborative process that includes representatives of all those who deliver public education services in CT as well as representatives of all those who are impacted by those services with a view to a recommendation for a new funding system being presented to the Governor and Legislature by January 1, 2018.